



FEBRUARY 1, 1954



1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

*This issue of THE NATIONAL VOTER is being devoted entirely to the proposed national Current Agenda and Platform for 1954-1956. Additional copies are available at the national office, 2¢ each.*

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan organization, promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League carries out this purpose through its Program and Voters Service. Voters Service is a year-round activity which provides non-partisan factual information on the political processes, on candidates and on issues in the interest of responsible and responsive government.

## Proposed National Program—1954-1956

*"The Program consists of the governmental measures and policies on which the League may take action. The Platform shall consist of (1) governmental principles supported by the League as a whole and (2) positions on national issues to which the League has given sustained attention and on which it may continue to take action. The Current Agenda shall be limited to such current governmental issues as the Convention shall choose for concerted action." (Proposed national By-laws—Article XIV.)*

### Current Agenda

- I. Support of U. S. trade policies that will help solve national and international economic problems (Principle 17).\*
- II. Development of understanding of the relationship between individual liberty and the public interest (Principle 1).

### Platform: Continuing Responsibilities

1. Self-government for the District of Columbia (Principles 2 and 3); extension of national suffrage to the citizens of the District (Principle 2).
2. Measures to counteract inflation or deflation (Principle 12).
3. Opposition to constitutional limitation on tax rates (Principle 11).
4. Measures to improve the budgetary procedures of the Congress (Principle 5).
5. Opposition to constitutional changes that limit the powers of the federal government over foreign relations (Principle 1).
6. U. S. support of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including adequate financial contributions, increased use, and improved procedures. (Principles 17 and 18).
7. U. S. support of measures designed to keep the peace through the United Nations and regional defense arrangements (Principle 17).
3. U. S. support of measures to promote international economic development and technical assistance (Principle 17).

\*See p. 2

## Platform: Principles

1. The principles of representative government and individual liberty established in the Constitution of the United States.
2. A system of government which is responsive to the will of the people and which enables the voter to carry out his obligations as a citizen.
3. A system of government in which responsibility is clearly fixed.
4. A system of government which promotes coordination of the operations of federal, state and local governments.
5. Governmental organization and administration which contribute to economy and efficiency.
6. A civil service at all levels of government which uses a merit system for the selection, retention and promotion of personnel.
7. Legal protection of citizens in their right to vote.
8. A system of free public education which provides equal opportunity for all.
9. Protection of minority groups against discrimination.
10. Removal of legal and administrative discriminations against women.
11. A system of taxation that takes into account ability to pay and the general welfare.
12. Fiscal and monetary policies that promote a stable and expanding economy.
13. Responsibility of government to share in the solution of social and economic problems which affect the general welfare.
14. Conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest.
15. Adequate financing for government functions and services.
16. Adoption of domestic policies which will facilitate the solution of international problems.
17. Cooperation with other nations in solving international problems.
18. Development of international organization and international law to achieve permanent means of cooperation.

## Platform: Explanation

THE Platform proposed by the national Board is presented in two simple lists, the Principles and the Continuing Responsibilities, without subdivision into categories. This makes it possible to print the Continuing Responsibilities and the Current Agenda on one page and clearly shows their importance as an integral part of the active League program for 1954-1956. These Continuing Responsibilities represent the Board's choice of "national issues to which the League has given sustained attention . . . and for which it has a continuing responsibility." They are issues on which the League seems to be in clear agreement, and on which it is ready to act with a minimum of new preparation. They are "unfinished business" that either requires continued action now, or may require action in the near future. They are clearly "applications of basic governmental principles." They are issues that, taken together with the proposed Current Agenda, constitute a balanced and feasible workload.

Continuing Responsibilities 1 and 2 are transferred (reworded) from the present Platform. CR 3 is designed to permit continued action by state Leagues which must be authorized under a national Continuing Responsibility, as the legislation involved affects national policy. CR 4 is transferred from the 1952-1954 Current Agenda item II.

CR 5 is based on proposed Principle I, and would authorize work on the Bricker Amendment or similar legislation on the ground of its effect on basic consti-

tutional principles as well as its effect on international cooperation. CR 6, which is in part a transfer from the 1952-1954 Current Agenda (Item I), would authorize continuation of the sustained, year-round work on the UN that the League has been doing, and would also make possible work on Charter Review if this seems desirable. CR 7 would authorize possible work on a wide range of specific measures such as control of atomic energy, disarmament or regional defense pacts. CR 8 would permit continued work on Point IV and other measures to promote international economic development.

The principles represent the "governmental principles supported by the League as a whole." They serve as authority for adoption of national, state and local Current Agenda, and as guidance for Boards in directing the work of the League. Most of these will be recognized as transferred unchanged, or slightly reworded from the present Platform.

Principle 1 is designed to define the general framework of constitutional principles within which the League works, and to give authorization for Current Agenda items in the general field of government, which seemed inadequately covered by the other principles. It is also intended to include Principle I of the present Platform. Principles 17 and 18 include in reworded form the substance of IV C and IV 1, 2, 3 of the present Platform.

## Proposed Current Agenda: Explanation

### **I. Support of U. S. trade policies that will help solve national and international economic problems.**

A desire to expand League work on world trade problems was strongly and widely expressed in program recommendations. In proposing a specific Current Agenda item on trade, the Board was influenced not only by this fact, but also by the following considerations: 1) belief that the solution of world trade problems is a key to the solution of many other international and national problems; 2) the extent of past League work; 3) the appropriateness of the issue for community action, using methods with which many Leagues are now experimenting; 4) the extent of possible legislative action.

#### ***Why is trade a key issue?***

Expanding world trade is necessary for the economic development and stability of many nations of the free world, and thus for the security of all. It is necessary to the maintenance of our own standard of living, level of employment, and defense strength. It is indispensable to a world climate in which cooperative solutions of common problems become possible.

#### ***How has the League approached the trade problem?***

During the past 20 years the League has worked on various measures that relate U. S. trade policy to the problems of our time. We have worked for the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act as a cornerstone of U. S. foreign economic policy. During the post-war period the League supported the Marshall Plan, and succeeding economic aid plans when aid was needed to supplement trade. As the U. S. reduces its foreign aid, it becomes increasingly obvious that the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act is not adequate to produce the necessary trade expansion.

#### ***What is the new trade job the board foresees?***

One group of experts after another has recommended changes in our trade policy which would remove blocks to a balanced trade. The Gray, Rockefeller, Paley, and Bell Reports and now the Randall Report, emphasize the fact that world trade cannot be expanded unless the U. S. is willing to undertake new approaches. Failure to develop new approaches is not due to a lack of expert agreement as to the measures required, but rather due to a lack of general understanding by the people of the U. S. as to the importance of world trade in the life of each individual in each community of this country. The task of the League of Women Voters, therefore, is to demonstrate and dramatize this fact in every way possible. The task requires a new search for facts at the local and state levels: facts on the actual stake of local communities in world trade, facts on the opinions held by the citizens of these communities, facts on the best way to bring about better understanding of the problem in particular areas. Such a task requires cooperation and coordination of the efforts of many organizations and individuals interested in pursuing new ideas for promoting trade. Finally, the task is to work with members of the

*(Continued on page 4)*

### **II. Development of understanding of the relationship between individual liberty and the public interest.**

In the current climate of tensions and doubts, the Board recognizes that a review of our basic legal and constitutional liberties would enable the League to make a constructive contribution. Recent national Conventions have indicated increasing desire to devote League time and attention to developing understanding of this subject. This year's program recommendations on individual liberty far exceeded those in any other domestic field.

The Board attempted to incorporate several ideas which were suggested repeatedly in the program letters: 1) the concept that safeguarding individual liberty is essential to sound representative government; 2) recognition that our heritage of individual liberty, if it is to remain a living principle serving the public interest, must be constantly reexamined, evaluated and adapted to new situations; 3) belief that protection of our national security must include the safeguarding of the freedom of the individual as indispensable to the strength of our country, and 4) belief that solution of current problems will depend to a great extent on wide citizen understanding of the fundamental role of freedom of opinion in a constitutional democracy.

#### ***Is this item in keeping with the purpose and practices of the League?***

The close relationship between the principles of individual liberty and the purposes of the League is demonstrated by such League practices as reaching group decisions in a democratic manner. More than ever, carrying out the League purpose to promote political responsibility is dependent on the assurance of free and full discussion. The League's nonpartisan and objective approach will help provide a basis for effective community work on these issues.

#### ***How does this item relate to the 1952-54 Voters' Service statement on "individual liberty"?***

The 1952 Convention gave expression to the growing interest in individual liberty by expanding the Voters Service statement to include the development of "understanding of the essentials of individual liberty." As in that statement, the proposed item emphasizes that "the heart of the problem lies in public attitudes."

Through this recent work, a basis for membership and community understanding of the principles of individual liberty has already been established. Many Leagues have made extensive use of the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund publication, *Individual Liberty, U. S. A.* and related League materials.

Authorization for work under the proposed Item II would differ from the present Voters Service authorization in several important respects:

1. As a Current Agenda item, this field would have priority in League planning, time, and effort.

2. The scope of work would be expanded. Emphasis would be placed on defining individual liberty and clarifying its relationship to specific current problems.

3. Legislative action would be authorized under this

*(Continued on page 4)*





From the

## PRESIDENT'S Desk

**I**N this issue of *THE NATIONAL VOTER* you will find the proposed Current Agenda and Platform formulated by the national Board. These proposals are the result of extensive consideration by Boards and members. There has never been in the history of the League such a high quality and great quantity of membership participation as occurred during the first round of program-making. It is now up to you to consider these proposals most carefully and to send to the national office through your local and state Leagues, your reactions to and suggestions for changes in the Board's recommendations. These suggestions must be received by the national office not later than April 5, according to our By-laws. Convention decision on these matters must be a reflection of the best in League thinking.

In some respects, this will be a new kind of Convention in Denver during the last week in April. As the Convention grows larger, it becomes increasingly difficult to find enough time to permit every delegate to participate in the debate. There are just not enough hours in five days to allow nearly 1,000 women to speak on the floor individually. Therefore, the Convention will try out the new procedures recommended by the Convention Committee on Representation.

Delegates within each state will choose, on the first day of the Convention, representatives who will be called spokesmen and they will be the only ones participating in the Program debate on the floor. It is hoped that by thus limiting the number of speakers, each subject will get fuller and more thorough treatment. The spokesmen will be responsible for presenting both majority and minority points of view as they are developed in the small meetings in which all delegates will participate. The whole delegate body will make the final decisions based on the recommendations which will be formulated by the spokesmen.

We plan to send, in advance to the Leagues, new material which will be helpful in preparing delegates for their responsibilities and will further clarify new Convention procedures.

Now as you look over the proposed Current Agenda and Continuing Responsibilities, there are many questions which you might discuss to advantage. But one of them is of paramount importance: are these proposals the best possible vehicle for carrying out the purpose of the League?

*Rercy Maxim Lee*

### MRS. LEE WINS AWARD

On January 27, Mrs. Lee was presented with a handsome bronze plaque as winner of the Wendy Warren Award for February, given in conjunction with *TODAY'S WOMAN* magazine. The citation, which reads in part "To a woman of achievement who has added stature to woman's place in the world," was made public over the CBS network on the program "Wendy Warren and the News."

A picture of Mrs. Lee and a short explanation of the award appears in the February issue of *TODAY'S WOMAN*.

### Item I—Continued from page 3

Congress to develop United States trade policies towards these ends.

#### What U. S. action may be required?

Trade policies and legislation that may be considered and possibly supported are varied. Some of the questions to be explored are the following: By what means, other than tariffs and import quotas, can industries meet and adjust to competition from imports? Should the Congress repeal the Buy American Act? Are national defense industries threatened by increased imports? To what extent and by what means can the U. S. prevail upon other nations to remove their monetary and other controls on U. S. exports? What should be the U. S. policy with respect to trade between the free world and Communist countries? How can private investment abroad be encouraged? How do U. S. agricultural surpluses affect world markets? What should be the attitude of the U. S. toward the development of international machinery for the promotion of an expanded world trade?

### Item II—Continued from page 3

item if League agreement is reached and specific measures meet League requirements.

#### What would this item cover?

The League would study both individual liberty and the public interest in order to understand their relationship. The term "individual liberty" refers especially to the first ten amendments of the Constitution, their judicial interpretations and implementing legislation. As used here it would not include "civil rights," (i.e. rights denied because of race, color, religion, national origin, and ancestry) or immigration legislation. "The public interest" recognizes the need for national security and the necessity of placing limitations on the individual. Individual freedom is equally important to the public interest.

Work under this item would begin with an examination of the constitutional, legislative and judicial framework of individual liberty, their significance and the historical reasoning behind them. Specific application would depend on Convention discussion, current developments, and League opinion as it evolves during the two-year period. Subjects which might be considered include:

1. Congressional procedures for conducting hearings; especially as they affect the rights of individuals.
2. Proposals for granting immunity from prosecution to individuals who testify before congressional committees.
3. Provisions and procedures of the federal security program.
4. Proposals for legalizing admission of wire-tapping evidence in court proceedings.

## THE NATIONAL VOTER

Vol. III

FEBRUARY 1, 1954

No. 13

Published by the League of Women Voters of the U. S. twice monthly during sessions of Congress. Otherwise published monthly except July and August.

1026 17th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

MRS. JOHN G. LEE, President

Editors: MRS. ALEXANDER GUYOL  
MRS. CHARLES E. PLANCK

Entered as second-class matter, April 9, 1951, at the Post Office, Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Subscriptions: \$1.00 per year.